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INPORT NEWS

SERVING PORT COLBORNE • WAINFLEET • SHERKSTON • LOWBANKS • ISSUE NO. 1 VOLUME 16

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■ **WAINFLEET MAYOR:** Newcomer April Jeffs and council moving forward



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

With her dog Bambi resting on the couch, Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs talks about her first year in office as a rookie mayor. Jeffs and an almost all-rookie council tackled some big issues in the first year of their four-year term.

A year of change

DAVE JOHNSON
 InPort News Staff

WAINFLEET — The Big Pipe, an interim control bylaw for the lake-shore, wind turbines, a new official plan and arena problems — all big items for a council and mayor to tackle during their first year in office.

Especially for an almost all-rookie council and mayor.

But, Mayor April Jeffs and Council — newcomer aldermen Richard Dykstra, Betty Kone and David Wyatt, with veteran Ted Hessel

— took on each issue and, in most cases, came up with solutions they and the community were satisfied with.

Jeffs says the Big Pipe was an issue that was fairly easy to take on, especially with a good majority of township residents opposed to Niagara Region's proposed plan that considered installing a water-sewer line from Port Colborne to the Haldimand County border to take care of failing septic systems along the Lake Erie shoreline.

see **MAYOR** | page 2

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DREAM IT. BUY IT. LIVE IT.

■ MAYOR

Baptism by fire for Jeffs in rookie year

FROM PAGE 1

"It was clear that no one wanted it ... our goal was to get it removed. I have to be honest, I think the region was ready for us to come in and tell them we didn't want it. I think they saw the writing on the wall when they saw who was voted in here," the mayor says.

Jeffs says with the region having so many other projects on the go, she's pretty sure most councillors at the upper level were relieved the township asked for the proposal to be removed from the books.

"We had a plan in place, too," she adds.

I have to give a lot of credit to staff. When we walked in and said we didn't want the Big Pipe, they said they'd work with us and do whatever we needed. That's what they have been doing, they've been getting this program in place."

Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs

That plan is the find, replace, repair program. If implemented, inspections in the boil water advisory area of Wainfleet, everything south of the former CN rail line, now the Gord Harry Trail, to the lakeshore would be carried out every three years. Inspections could be mandatory when property is transferred from one party to another.

The first non-intrusive phase of the program would have township staff gather information and check out systems. If a problem or risk is found, a more detailed inspection would be carried out by qualified third parties. Homeowners would be responsible for any repairs.

Township staff have consulted with the Ontario



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

When she's not on the job as mayor of Wainfleet, taking photos for her photography business and spending time with her husband and two sons, April Jeffs can be found riding the roads of Wainfleet and Niagara on her motorcycle.

Wastewater Association, region and other agencies on the program.

"I have to give a lot of credit to staff. When we walked in and said we didn't want the Big Pipe, they said they'd work with us and do whatever we needed. That's what they have been doing, they've been getting this program

in place," Jeffs says. The mayor and council feel the program is a step in the right direction and that it can be a shining example to other communities and it won't cost hundreds of millions of dollars, like the Big Pipe could have.

To complement the find, repair, replace program, Wainfleet has put an

interim control bylaw in place along the lakeshore.

The bylaw freezes most development in the boil water advisory area for a year. It's a temporary bylaw and any developments that meet current bylaws will be allowed. Things like replacing shingles, doors or windows are allowed, as are any new developments that

meet with existing bylaws.

"We just wanted a year so that could get a handle on things and move forward. It will be lifted when we have our new zoning bylaws in place," Jeffs says.

"The bylaw was really contentious with a certain group of people and we got a lot of negative feedback, but we also had some posi-

“You could have a lot of new development in the hamlet areas over the next few years and not even notice it.”

Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs

tive feedback as well." Jeffs says people have accused her and council of not wanting development in Wainfleet because of the Big Pipe being killed and the interim control bylaw being put in place.

"It's not true. We don't have a big tax base here in Wainfleet and it makes it hard when we deal with the budget," she says, adding new development would increase the tax base.

Wainfleet is primarily a rural community, and council and residents want to keep it that way, but development can take place in the hamlet areas, she says.

The new official plan, started by the previous council, directs new development to the hamlets of the township, such as the Winger area.

"You could have a lot of new development in the hamlet areas over the next few years and not even notice it," the mayor says.

While the township works on the interim control bylaw, official plan and the find, repair, replace program, it still has everyday challenges to deal with.

One of those challenges, and one that was completely unexpected, is Wainfleet Arena.

An inspection carried out earlier this year found a number of issues with the arena. A number of additions were put on with no record of building permits having ever been issued. And it has no fire alarm system.

Costs to install fire alarms and bring the building up to code are estimated to be in the \$2-million range.

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■ MAYOR

Township staff 'onside' with Jeffs' approach

FROM PAGE 2

Jeffs says council never gave any consideration to closing the facility, even though neighbouring Port Colborne is building a new health and wellness centre that will have two ice surfaces.

"There's no appetite for that in Wainfleet at all," she says, adding many consider the arena to be the bub of the community.

"The arena will always be there."

What Wainfleet decides to do with the facility will be up to residents and council. It could undergo changes to alleviate some of the concerns brought out in the report about the state of the facility.

There was some talk of wind turbines on the campaign trail and it was in the back of our minds, but it came on so fast. It was a baptism by fire for an inexperienced council."

Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs

Some in the community would like to see the mayor and council just waive the rules when it comes to the arena, says Jeffs.

People want the township and council to waive rules when it comes to many things, including development along the lakeshore.

"We can't do that, we have to go through certain procedures."

As a small business owner — Jeffs runs a photography business — she's used to the idea of getting something done if it needs to be done and making it happen.

"We all council have a real drive to make things happen quicker, but it doesn't work that way in government."

Now that's she been in the mayor's seat for a year,

Jeffs has a better handle on what's covered by various levels of government — region, federal or provincial.

She quickly learned the provincial government has full control over the major issue affecting Wainfleet residents today — wind turbines.

Under the Green Energy Act, Ontario makes all the decisions regarding the number and placement of wind turbines in communities across the province.

"There was some talk of wind turbines on the campaign trail and it was in the back of our minds, but it came on so fast. It was a baptism by fire for an inexperienced council," Jeffs says.

She believes council did the right thing by holding a public meeting to hear from residents about what they thought. One wind turbine project is proposed in the Burnaby area, while another is looking toward the north end of the township, close to the West Lincoln border.

Residents' thoughts and council discussion led to a moratorium on wind turbines in the township being passed. However, that moratorium holds no real weight because the province has the final say in the process.

Jeffs and her council were supportive of a recent private member's bill to put decision-making back in the hands of local municipalities when it came to wind turbines and solar panels. That bill was defeated about a month ago — with support of the township's new MPP, Cindy Foster.

Jeffs is not opposed to green energy. She just wants to see the township have more say over where things go.

Though the issue has cooled down a bit, at least three times a week she'll have residents stop her and ask where things are at.

"People have a lot of questions and concerns about adverse health issues



Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs talks with a resident during a break at a council meeting earlier this year. Jeffs likes to meet with as many residents and delegations as she can before each council meeting.

"I like to think I'm approachable. I'm jokey and lighthearted and sometimes I worry that can be perceived the wrong way. When I need to be professional, I can be."

Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs

and property devaluation."

Having people stop and question her wherever she may be is something new to Jeffs. But being a very social person, she doesn't mind.

"I like to think I'm approachable. I'm jokey and lighthearted and sometimes I worry that can be perceived the wrong way,"

she says.

"When I need to be professional, I can be."

As part of her routine before each council meeting, Jeffs will head into council chambers and greet people who are there as delegations, proponents or opponents of projects, and those just there to watch

the proceedings.

"I know sometimes people who have never been to council can be nervous and I like to talk to them."

When she was first elected, her goal was to be an "old school" mayor. One who went to visit people, sit down in their kitchen and hash out a concern or problem.

During an orientation session for new council members, a municipal lawyer suggested that might not be a good thing to do. Township staff also suggested she may want to

reconsider that idea.

"I think in the beginning staff was trying to protect me and council, but as we went through a few issues and met with people, they saw how people reacted and the positive feedback we were receiving. Staff have jumped outside now."

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■ ourview

Roads always an issue

Wainfleet hasn't set talks for its 2012 budget yet, but Mayor Arif Jeffs said roads will probably be one of the top issues.

Roads are always an issue in the township, she said.

For years, work on Lakeshore Rd. and a number of roads that run off of it, was put off while the water-sewer issue, the Big Pipe, issue was ongoing. One can't blame the township for not wanting to fix roads that could have possibly been torn up to make way for a water-sewer line.

Last year, a number of the roads were fixed.

But fixing them cost Wainfleet almost its whole roads budget — around \$2.1 million — for the year. With Wainfleet's whole capital budget at \$3.97 million, it's a big chunk of change for roads.

This year, council will have to decide which roads in the township will be fixed next. It could also decide to pave certain gravel roads.

Residents have approached council to ask that their gravel roads be paved.

While in some cases we're sure paving a gravel road can be justified, in other cases it may not warrant it right now.

And while Wainfleet will have to deal with roads, so too will Port Colborne.

The city has spent the last few years fixing a number of roads, but there is always more work to be done.

There are roads in Port Colborne that need work, but how much the city spends depends on the budget and the condition of the road.

Both in Wainfleet and Port Colborne, there is more road work to be done than money in the bank.

We're not sure what the solution is to finding more money, but we hope both municipalities are able to at least fix the roads a number of times of repair.

ASK COUNCIL A QUESTION

Both Mayor Vance Badawey and Mayor Arif Jeffs are holding levees this weekend.

The levees — Wainfleet's is on Saturday and Port's is on Sunday — are a chance for residents to come out and talk with the mayor of their respective municipality.

Members of both councils will also be hand to meet with residents and celebrate the start of a new year.

Residents should take the opportunity to attend the levee in their city. It gives them a chance to ask any question they want and find out where their representative stands.

It's a chance to voice an opinion in an informal session. We encourage everyone in Wainfleet and Port Colborne to attend their levees.

■ I'VE BEEN THINKING

It's a brand new year

INTERIM PASTOR GARY TOMIUCK
Wainfleet Congregational Christian Church

As we look back on this last year, all of us have probably shed some tears, most of us have experienced some pain, and some of us have even endured the death of a loved one. Now that is brand New Year is upon us we may well experience some or all of these things again.

But the Lord will comfort us, encourage us, and see us through what ever unknown we have to face and we do not have to face it alone. For God knows the end from the beginning, not only for this year but for every year. It was nearly 2,000 years ago when God came down in the person of His Son. He left the highest heavens and came down to earth to be born as a baby, a fetus, a cell in the body of Mary.

We don't have to look up to try and find God as the Russian cosmonauts did while travelling in space, saying that "God is not up here." Billions of dollars are spent trying to track and hear signals from extra-terrestrial life or to prove that UFO's exist.

Jesus came to planet earth in space and time as an IBB (Identified Baby Boy). We don't have to cry out in hopelessness, the brides of song popular songs like Pink Floyd's "Hello is there anybody out there?" and "I know you're out there somewhere" by the Moody Blues.

The Lord's birth was the very first step in His mission to us. There are three things I would like all of you to

consider as they carry you into this New Year.

How can it be? When the Angel told Mary that she would give birth to Jesus as a virgin. She was overwhelmed and although she did not understand this she still believed.

She was the one who tended, who cared for her very new child for her helpless baby. She felt the breath of God, the heartbeat of God and she even changed the diaper of God. And that little tender scalp that Mary rolled and kissed would 33 years later feel the sharp pain of thorns that were driven into his tender scalp, and those little baby hands and feet that move joyfully and kicked about happily would have those spikes hammered viciously into them. As the one who stretched out the heavens would stretch his hands out on that cross and die for the sins of the world. How can it be that the heart of God stopped beating. How can it be that the breath of

God ceased. Some doctors have said that one of the reasons Jesus died so quickly was because of a broken heart. Mary also experienced a broken heart when Simon said to her "A sword will pierce your soul too." Luke 2:25.

Standing by the cross looking upon her son's broken, battered and bloody body and hearing him groan in pain a sword truly pierced her heart.

Some of you have also experienced anguish, grief and overwhelming heartache and a sword has pierced you soul. What about that doctor's report? Will my loved ones be alive one year from now, one month, one week, one

day? Will my daughter or son arrive home safely? Will they die without Christ etc. How can it be? And that razor sharp sword plunges deeply and twists and turns over and over again.

You say no one understands me — just Mary who went through more than this. Nobody understands — just Jesus who experienced infinitely more. Nobody understands — just God who gave his only Son for us.

Now the second statement follows from that first question how can it be? That is, "With God nothing is impossible." Luke 1:34.

Luke 1:37. Take comfort throughout this year that the one who holds the universe together can hold your mind, your life, and your family together, and lastly. And now we come to the third statement which is our only logical response, "I am the Lord's servant." Luke 1:38.

In view of the birth, death and resurrection of Christ we should joyfully long to serve Him in gratitude.

His birth, death and resurrection stand or all together — the crib, the cross, the stone.

What will happen to you this year? Only God knows, but take Him in hand and walk with Him daily. The Lord may return this year or He may call you to Himself, in any event you are one day closer to your eternal home if you have put your faith and trust in Christ.

And you will have not only a brand new year but a brand new life in Christ. Do it now and have a Very Happy New Year.

■ COLUMN

Community is better when working together

LINDSAY CASTELLO
Special to InPort News

It is better to give than to receive. As the holiday season comes to a close, it is important to highlight those actions that have helped bring festive cheer to Port Colborne this year.

Individuals, groups and businesses have shown that coming together for a common good can contribute to the

betterment of the community.

Outreach organization Port Cares continued with its annual holiday traditions, drumming up volunteers and support to run the Adopt a Family program.

By collecting items and monetary donations from local businesses and residents, the organization was able to assist about 20 youth and families this year and provide them with gifts and support they may not otherwise receive.

Families are able to create wish lists that shoppers keep in mind when searching for the perfect presents.

The gift givers can go out and find suitable items or donate money so the organization can shop on their behalf.

Clothing and food items are popular choices and show that it is life's basic pleasures we have the ability to make a difference for those in need.

see CASTELLO | page 5

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■ COSTELLO

50 kids take part in dinner party

FROM PAGE 4

In addition to Adopt a Family, Port Cares also held a children's pizza party. This new addition to the organization's holiday efforts brought more than 50 children to the Reach Out Food Centre on the Wednesday before Christmas for some food and fun. Children got to take home a gift and had the opportunity to meet with Santa Claus during the dinner party.

Port Cares Executive Director Lynda Reinhart said that although the event was new, it was a success and that the party is something she hopes will become an annual event at the centre.

"It was a really great time," said Reinhart.

Port Cares also received donations of mittens and hats that will be distributed throughout winter to provide warmth for those in need.

To top it all off, Port Cares' Reach Out Food Centre held a turkey dinner as part of its meal program on Dec. 23 and will

celebrate the New Year at the Nickel St. facility with a special dinner today.

Reinhart said Port Cares has felt a positive response to their project this season.

"People have been very generous this year," she said. "They've been very supportive."

She said the work the community puts in when helping others in need was noticeable results.

"It surely makes a difference," she said.

The Port Colborne Operatic Society also gave back to the community this year with their contribution to the Christian View Fellowship and Recreation Centre's lunch program.

Nick and Barb Ceply of the centre said the Operatic Society reached out again this year to carry on in a tradition. The pair have ties to the musical group, having been involved in past productions and providing the group with a space to practice when its main venue

was unavailable.

The cast of Annie, the society's latest effort, brought food items to rehearsal each week throughout the fall season and were able to collect a bin full of items that will be used in the meals served Wednesday at noon year round.

Weekly meals, which allow people to share in fellowship and enjoy a hot lunch, are open to the public and are held at the centre, which is on the corner of Nickel and Davis St. on Port Colborne's East Side.

These are just some of the contributions that helped make the holidays special for those in the city.

Whether it is a donation of gifts or simple time spent giving back, it is apparent that Port Colborne has embraced the true meaning of the holidays.



LINDSAY COSTELLO InPort News Photo

Nick Ceply of Christian View Fellowship and Recreation Centre accepts a bin of food donations from Port Colborne Operatic Society members Devon Lawrence and Emily Denney, who collected the items with the cast of Annie for use at the centre's weekly lunchtime gatherings.

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■ OAKWOOD DISPLAYS HOLIDAY SPIRIT



Oakwood Public School held its holiday concert, "A Penguin's Christmas", on Dec. 21. An extraordinary cast of students from Grades 4 to 8 filled the leading roles. Devon Grover starred as Santa Claus and Brooke Bultz starred as Mrs. Claus. All students in the primary and junior grades sang.

Supplied Photo



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Oakwood Public School student council members, from left, Nathan Potts, Michael Benson, Jonathon Bokma, Connor Buchanan, Ashley Gillespie, Erin McKenzie and Logan Campbell hold some of the toys collected for Santa's Helpers. The council challenged all classes in the school to donate. Non-perishable food items were also donated to the food bank in Port Colborne.

■ TRAILERS: Employee housing removed, new accommodations to be built

Skydive Burnaby moving forward without trailers

DAVE JOHNSON
InPort News Staff

WAINFLEET — Eighteen trailers that once housed staff at Skydive Burnaby have been removed from the property, said owner Tara Pitt.

The trailers had been ordered removed by the township, but remained on the property until a

council meeting in late November.

At that meeting, aldermen decided not to allow the construction of 18 buildings measuring 8.28 square metres each to replace the trailers used by seasonal employees at the facility on Burnaby Rd. The smaller units, council felt, would set a bad precedent and not conform to any property standard or zoning bylaws.

"We fought for nine years but came to the realization that we lost the fight," said Pitt, who owns Skydive Burnaby with her husband, Mike. "In no way are we defeated though."

Pitt said the trailers are all gone now and it both hurts and helps the skydive facility.

As a seasonal business, the couple

is doing all it can to survive in an uncertain economy and having staff accommodated onsite helps.

About 40 employees work at Skydive Burnaby during the season, and staff accommodation would be for those who come from outside Niagara.

"We have staff from Toronto and one man who comes down

from Sudbury to our drop zone. We have very loyal people with us, we're a tight family here and we'll get through it. All we can do is keep moving forward."

While the township would allow for the construction of a bunkhouse that could house 20 people, Pitt said the couple isn't sure what is going on with the property.

"We're going to build something ... it will be bigger and better than what we had before. We're actually a little excited."

She said whatever is built on the property, on the east side of Burnaby Rd., has to be in before the skydiving season kicks off.

Depending on the weather, skydivers could start jumping in mid-May.

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■ SANTA'S HELPERS

A community that cares

MARYANNE FIRTH
InPort News

WELLAND — Christmas is known as the season of giving. And nowhere does that sentiment ring truer than in south Niagara.

A helping hand was available in every corner of the community in both Welland and Port Colborne in hopes of making the holidays a time that everyone could enjoy — regardless of their financial situation.

Through the Christmas hamper program facilitated by Welland agencies Salvation Army, The Hope Centre and St. Vincent de Paul, 1,577 individuals were helped this season — 890 of them aged 16 and under.

This year's registrant total is about the same as years past, said Salvation Army executive director Greg Warkentin, and also includes 105 families who were adopted by local schools, businesses and community members.

Family adoption is a growing trend, Warkentin said.

More and more groups and even families forfeit purchasing

gifts for one another in order to provide an unforgettable holiday experience for a less fortunate family.

This year's Christmas hamper program was run a bit differently than in years past.

Last year, for the first time, the hamper program was only offered to families and not single adults. This year, the program returned to offering hampers to both groups.

Also new this year was a partnership with Holy Trinity Church, which offered up its building for use in distributing the Christmas gifts.

The partnership between the three agencies and local church has proven successful this year.

"We all have limited resources," Warkentin said.

"But it's wonderful to be able to share the resources we do have."

By pooling limited funds together, the agencies are able to help more people, he added.

In Port Colborne, the need for assistance was also great.

At least 360 families found their holidays brightened by Santa's Helpers.

It was a successful year for the group that provides food, clothing and toys to families in need over the holidays.

The number of people coming in for assistance increased this year, and so did the number of new faces that Mieke Van Es saw pass through the doors of Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet, where Santa's Helpers were stationed.

The program's co-ordinator said the Christmas season came on quickly for many lakeside city residents who recently lost their jobs, were laid off or were waiting for Employment Insurance to kick in.

But with the help of more than 50 volunteers and many generous donations from the community, the program was able to assist each registrant who sought some Christmas cheer.

"Donations were wonderful this year," Van Es said, crediting local residents, corporations and schools for pitching in and giving what they could to make the holidays more enjoyable for others.

see SANTA'S HELPERS | page 8

Guardian Drugs

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Cough & Cold Season



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Ted Oseado
R.Ph.B.Sc.PhM

Cough and Cold season is here again. There are many questions about which medication is the best to treat cold symptoms. Unfortunately we have no cure for a stuffy head, runny nose, cough, and sore throat, but there are ways to treat these symptoms.

For children under six, it is best not to use traditional cold medications. They don't work well, and often cause more unwanted side effects than benefit. Tylenol or Advil should be used to treat fever and help with discomfort.

Administer plenty of fluids to help loosen congestion. Saline nasal sprays and drops can be used to loosen mucus as well as gentle suctioning. A vaporizer in the child's room can make breathing easier, but remember to change the water daily to avoid the growth of moulds and bacteria. Turn down the heat in the house. Warm dry air can be more difficult to breathe and cause irritation. Opening a window in the child's room is also helpful. A teaspoon of honey can help settle a cough at night time, but don't give to children less than one year of age (they don't have the proper gut flora to protect against possible botulism). Typical rubs such as Vicks vapor rub contain menthol, camphor and eucalyptus. They can provide a feeling of being able to breathe easier, but they should be applied sparingly and under a shirt to avoid contact with eyes and mouth. Camphor should not be used in children under two as there are concerns about absorption and liver damage.

For adults there are many products to choose from. Again, side effects caused by the medication can be worse than the cold. All of the non-medical suggestions used for kids can also be effective for adults. Decongestants like pseudoephedrine, are generally not recommended for patients with high blood pressure. There is a product called Coricidin that does help with congestion and is safe for people with high blood pressure.

For cough due to cold, a product with an antihistamine-decongestant combo works quite well. Find one with a first generation antihistamine in it like brompheniramine, an example would be Doralcol cold and sinus. Naproxen (now available in Canada without a prescription) can also help with a cough due to its anti-inflammatory properties. Cough syrups with dextromethorphan may help with a cough and are generally safe for everyone to take. Some syrups have an expectorant in them called guaifenesin, which is useful to help loosen mucus. In general it does not make much sense to buy a product with both of these ingredients in it. If you want to get rid of mucus in your chest, you don't want an ingredient to suppress your cough. Narcotic cough medications work the best to settle a cough but require a prescription from your doctor.

Make sure you understand what all of the ingredients are in your cold medication. Often they will contain Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Advil (ibuprofen). You don't want to take more than the recommended doses of those medications. However, you do want to take some Tylenol or Advil, they are both effective at treating fever and a soar throat.

A cold is much different than the flu. The flu presents with fatigue, body aches, fever and sometimes a cough. A cold is associated with runny nose, sore throat, and cough. Although a cold makes us uncomfortable, generally the symptoms are manageable. The best thing to do is use a mixture of old-fashioned remedies, cough and cold products, and rest as much as possible.

The flu (especially this year) can be life threatening. It is not treatable with over the counter medications. If you suspect you may have the flu, you should see a physician.

As always the best treatment is prevention. Remember to wash your hands thoroughly and stay home if you are sick.

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■ SANTA'S HELPERS

More than 350 families helped by group

FROM PAGE 7

She expressed the appreciation all families showed as they received their early Christmas presents.

"We want to thank the whole community, everyone from Port Colborne, Wainfleet and Sheraton who helped out."

Also embracing the Christmas spirit was Lakeshore Catholic High School, which held its annual Christmas Toy and Food Drive.

Through the initiative more than 400 toys, more than 100 gift cards and countless food bank donations were collected for various agencies in Port

Colborne- Wainfleet, Crystal Beach and Fort Erie.

"What really makes the drive special though are the acts of generosity and little miracles that occur as staff and students rally to meet the challenge each year," said the school's chaplaincy leader, Kathryn Mistry.

"Student council hosted a photo booth at the semi-formal (dinner dance). Other students enthusiastically took part in an out-of-uniform day to raise \$1,600."

Mistry said another student decided to part with his cherished dinosaur collection hoping that some younger

child would enjoy the toy figures as much as he had.

On the last day of the drive, after hundreds of new toys had already been picked up by Santa's Helpers and St. Vincent de Paul, a final bag of toys was being assembled for children living at Casa el Norte in Fort Erie when it became apparent

that there was no suitable toy left for a 18-month-old boy.

"Just then another student appeared rather apologetically for being a day late with her contribution. To everyone's amazement she contributed a wonderful toy farm with the suggested age level of 18 months," Mistry said.



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■ **MEET WITH COUNCIL:** Mayor and council to be on hand in Wainfleet and Port

Mayors' levees this weekend

InPort News Staff

WAINFLEET — The township's doing something a little different for the 2012 mayor's levee.

Mayor April Jeffs said the levee, to be held Saturday,

Jan. 7 at 1 p.m., in addition to being a chance for residents to talk with her and council, will also see Christmas tree burnings.

"People can drop off their trees ahead of time if they can't be there that

day," said Jeffs, adding residents can contact the township office for more information.

The levee will be held in the ball diamonds off of Station Rd. behind the arena and Marshville

Heritage Village. It's the area where trees, real trees only, will be burned as well under the supervision of the fire service.

"We thought we'd do a little something different this year," said Jeffs.

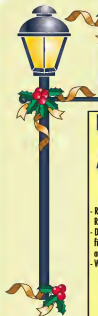
Mayor Vance Badawey said his levee will be held the day following Wainfleet's.

"Ours is on Sunday, Jan. 8 at 1 p.m."

Badawey said he and council will be on hand

at city hall for the annual levee and all residents are invited to come out.

For more information on both levees contact Wainfleet at 905-899-3463 and Port Colborne at 905-835-2900.



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■ **CASCO:** Arena site of annual event put on by city and company

Different kind of icing at arena



KATHLEEN CLARK
For InPort News

PORT COLBORNE — Westside Arena was host to a little more icing than usual Saturday — and not of the hockey variety.

The annual Casco and Friends Kids New Year's Eve Carnival saw children decorating chocolate chip cookies, with mounds of the sugary stuff. They also had the opportunity to make puppets, skate and take in a Mad Science Show with an actual mad scientist.

"It's a great show," said Suzanne Webster, with her five year-old daughter Rebecca perched on her knee.

Webster thought she'd be in her hometown of London, Ont., for New Year's Eve. Instead, the arena's sign promising free skating on Saturday changed her mind and her holiday plans.

"I was just driving by and I thought 'Oh, we can go skating,'" she said.

The other activities were all a bonus. She said she didn't even know about them.

Marilyn Williams, a Roselawn volunteer, helped

hold down the fort, armed with canisters of icing and ample rolls of paper towel. She made sure the children could at least double the size of their cookies with decorations.

"I'd say about a hundred have come through," she said. "It's great to see all the budding artists in Port Colborne."

While creating her work of art, five-year-old Emma Prunyn was already contemplating her next activity of the day — face-painting.

"I think I want a firefly. I think I want that, I don't know yet," she said before going with her mom to find the paint station.

Whether the bright colours on their faces were because of paint or icing, one thing was constant — the toothy grins.

"It seems to be a very community-based town," said Joshua Walker, who brought along his daughter Kristen to take part in the activities.

He said it's partly for events such as these that he moved to Port Colborne from Niagara Falls a year and a half ago.

"If there's ever anything going on in the community, everyone goes. It's really nice."

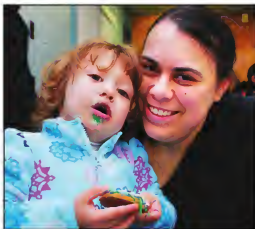
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KATHLEEN CLARK Tribune Photos
TOP LEFT: From left, Elliot Prunyn, 3, Emma Prunyn, 5, and Grace Ward, 5, make beautiful paper bag puppets at the craft table at the Casco and Friends Kids New Year's Eve Carnival in Port Colborne.

LEFT: Three-year-old Zoe Bates shows off the cookie she decorated with her mom, Kristie Bates, at the Casco and Friends Kids New Year's Eve Carnival.

ABOVE: Ten-year-old twins Alyssa and Legacy Leveille display their decorated cookies and painted faces at the Casco and Friends Kids New Year's Eve Carnival.

■ **EDUCATION:** Program to be delivered at Princess Elizabeth, Gordon and McKay schools

Public board expanding French immersion

QMI Agency

ST. CATHARINES — District School Board of Niagara will spend up to \$778,000 over the next three years to expand its French immersion program.

The board of trustees voted to offer French immersion at the Grade 4 level across Niagara starting in 2012. The program currently has entry windows at Grade 5. The board's program has been so successful they've been turning prospective students away for years because there wasn't enough space, said Carol Germyn, superintendent of school support services.

"The demand has increased and the consultation with parents said that they wanted further French immersion," she said.

The board will expand the program at Princess Elizabeth, Gordon, McKay, Central, Prince

Philip, Dalewood, Parliament Oak, Briardale and Alexandra schools, beginning September 2012.

French immersion promises students 3,800 hours of instruction in French by Grade 8.



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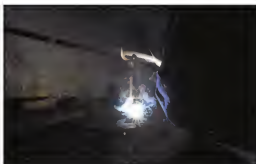
Brendon Haley, of Port Colborne High School's high skills major welding program, welds in preparation for a Canadian Welding Bureau flat welding ticket test. Kirk Dressel of Dressel Welding Supply Inc. in St. Catharines was at the school to help students prepare for the test.

DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Peter Blatchley, left, and Travis Tweedy, right, two students from Port Colborne High School's high skills major welding program, along with teacher Vic Barker, second from left, stand with Ron Keller of Lock 8 Equipment and Marine. The company recently donated a MIG welder to the program.



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Brendon Haley of Port Colborne High School's high skills major welding program welds in preparation for a Canadian Welding Bureau flat-welding ticket test. Kirk Dressel of Dressel Welding Supply Inc. in St. Catharines was at the school to help students prepare for the test.



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Travis Tweedy, left, watches as Kirk Dressel of Dressel Welding Supply Inc. in St. Catharines takes a measurement of his steel. Dressel was helping Tweedy, and Dalton Young, right, of Port Colborne High School's high skills major welding program for their Canadian Welding Bureau flat-welding ticket test.

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■ HOLIDAY CARD DESIGN WINNERS



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photos

Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs congratulated Hannah Dykstra, left, and Amber Smith, right, for their winning designs for the township's holiday cards. Emma Roszell, shown in the top left photo, and Jillian Edwards, in the bottom left photo, were also recognized for their winning designs.

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■ **RECREATION:** Canal-side facility will draw boarders and BMXers

It's a lock on skatepark site

DAVE JOHNSON
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Lock 8 Park is the unanimous choice as home of a skate-board and BMX park in Port Colborne.

Mayor Vance Badawey said people surveyed at a public open house on Monday, Dec. 19 chose the park alongside the Welland Canal as the preferred site over two others.

"There was a short list of three locations with aerial shots and a fourth location suggested at the meeting."

The choices, presented by consultant LANDinc., were H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park, Lock 8 Park, Seaway Park and the fourth location — suggested by youth at the meeting — was just south of the fire hall on Mellanby Ave.

LANDinc., which has

It's been far too long since youth in the city have been asked for their opinion."

Port Colborne Mayor Vance Badawey

worked on similar parks across the country, presented the pros and cons of each location to the 50 residents in attendance, about half of which were youth. Mayor's youth advisory council members were at the meeting.

"Lock 8 was picked because of its central location and high visibility," said Badawey, adding the city's youth and his youth council were encouraged and empowered to lead the process.

"It's been far too long since youth in the city have been asked for their opinion."

The mayor said high visibility was not only important

to the youth involved in the process, but also to Niagara Regional Police, who were also at the meeting. Police supported the location, he said, because it allows them to see the park and ensure the youth there are safe and protected.

There was some opposition to the choice of Lock 8 Park due to it being a tourist location in the city, especially with some teens using language others may find offensive.

"The youth council said it wasn't fair to paint all teens with the same brush," said Badawey, adding others said the whole city is a tourist location.



He said the discussion, even the opposition to the location, was cordial with no one fighting.

A report will now be brought forward to council in mid-January and construction could begin in the spring or summer of 2012.

Depending on the final design of the skateboard and BMX park it could cost between \$600,000 and \$700,000. Money was set aside for construction in 2010, said Badawey.

The mayor said the youth council pledged to fund 10% of the costs and have had people approach it to contribute to the project. Badawey said he and other councillors have also been approached by people wanting to help out.

"We may do something like we're doing at the (Vale) health and wellness centre, a donor wall or sidewalk."

■ TD CANADA TRUST TOY DRIVE



MARYANNE FIRTH Staff Photo

The annual toy collection at TD Canada Trust in Port Colborne began Dec. 1 and has yielded a mountain of gifts for Santa's Helpers, a program that provides families in need with food and toys for the holidays. Pictured in front, from left, are bank staff Nancy Acaster and Brooke Caldwell, and in back, from left, are bank manager Frank Dedonato and Santa's Helpers co-ordinator Mieke Van Es. Families can register for the program, which is based out of Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet, until Dec. 21. Hours are Monday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Toy, food and monetary donations are still being accepted at TD Canada Trust and Community Living.

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